

Eight Lies You Hear On Campus and In the World

By Richard Ochs

Lie #1: In order to believe the Bible one must commit intellectual suicide.

It is a myth of modern education that a truly intelligent person will not believe the Bible. Actually, many very intelligent people have viewed the Bible as not only essential to faith, but also as the very foundation of knowledge. Most of the early colleges in America were founded on this principle. William and Mary, Yale, and Princeton, to name a few, had the Bible at the center of their curriculum. As the first Harvard laws stated in 1642, "Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life, and therefore to lay Christ . . . as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning." Some of the greatest intellects of history have found the Christian world-view to be completely reasonable. Augustine, John Wycliffe, Rembrandt, John Milton, Blaise Pascal, Johann Sebastian Bach, Robert Boyle, Jonathan Edwards, Michael Faraday, James Clark Maxwell, Lord Kelvin, C. S. Lewis, and a multitude of others, saw no contradiction between thinking and believing. That God has revealed truth to men, especially in His Son Jesus Christ, is the only thing that can make sense out of life. The Bible is ridiculed by many so-called "intellectuals" today because their pride and arrogance has blinded them to the truth. "Professing themselves to be wise, they have become fools" (Romans 1:22). Don't fall for the pseudo-intellectualism so common on campus. Ultimately, it will matter little if you are counted wise or foolish by the college crowd. What will matter is whether you know God.

Lie #2: Evolution is a reasonable explanation of the origin and present makeup of the universe.

It is important to define what we mean by evolution. We are not just talking about change. Obviously, there has been a great deal of change in the world around us. By evolution we mean the hypothesis that molecules have become man through a purely naturalistic process. Men like G.G. Simpson, Jacques Monod, Carl Sagan and Richard Dawkins are some of its chief proponents. The following brief statement by Sagan is a good summation: "The Cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be." The idea that by pure chance life could somehow come from non-life and that the ultimate source of all we see, including man, is impersonal matter or energy, is absurd. The spontaneous generation of life was disproved long ago by Redi, Pasteur, and others. The concept has been smuggled back into modern science by evolutionists who need it to give a naturalistic origin for life. Despite popular misconception, the various biopoiesis experiments like the Miller-Urey spark discharge apparatus have not even come close to producing anything that could be called life. Even more destructive is the idea that impersonal, mindless matter aimlessly interacting with itself has somehow produced man

with his personality, rationality, and concepts of morality and purpose. Can amoral matter produce man personality and rationality? Can matter acted on only by time and chance give rise to man with true purpose and meaning? The whole theory is, in fact, self-destructive. Rationality is completely destroyed in a system that ascribes thought to irrational causes. Darwin himself states, "But then with me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would anyone trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?" By destroying the validity of man's mental activity, evolutionary theory cuts off its own head. The mind of man cannot be trusted for anything, not even for the theory of evolution itself. By denying God, man ends up denying his own humanness. Truth, beauty, love, morality, and rationality are robbed of significance. Everything becomes a pointless absurdity. Little wonder that the Bible states, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 53:1). Don't embrace this foolish myth. No matter how much you may try to suppress it, there still comes from deep within you the cry that you are not an animal or a machine, but a person. You didn't get this from the amoeba; you got it from God who created you and calls you to Himself.

Lie #3: Christianity is basically the same as the other religions of the world.

Though there are some superficial similarities between Christianity and other religions, Christianity's essential message stands in sharp contrast to all other beliefs. Christ claimed a relationship with God that excluded the possibility of salvation by any other way: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, except through Me" (John 14:6). Christianity is Christ. His life, death, and physical resurrection for sinners is Christianity's foundation. All other religions are essentially humanistic; sinful men attempt to reach God through their own efforts. In Christianity, God reaches down to sinful men and provides for them a perfect righteousness through the death of His Son on the cross. To view Christianity as basically the same as other religions is to miss its main message: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Lie #4: Money, power, pleasure, and prestige are the things that give real meaning and purpose to life.

Academic honor, the high-paying job, and the "good life" are all dangled before students as enticements for pursuing a college education. But are these things really what life is all about? One of the wisest men who ever lived had all these in abundance, but found they didn't satisfy. King Solomon had far more than you can ever hope to attain, yet came to realize that they gave no true meaning to life and that death would soon sweep them away. You brought nothing into the world; you can carry nothing out. A pursuit of the fleeting pleasures and treasures of this world is "chasing after the wind." Jesus added an even more sobering aspect to this quest. He said that not only will you lose all these things

at death, but you will also lose your soul. “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). Why waste your life on things that could, in the end, cost you your soul?

In contrast to the attitude of striving for self-advancement and self-gratification, Christ taught that the way of true greatness is to become a servant of others, that the kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit, and that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Lie #5: Jesus never claimed to be God.

A few quotes from the New Testament are sufficient to dispel this myth. In John 10:30, Christ expressly claimed equality with God by stating, “I and the Father are one.” Later in the same book, He made the same claim in a different way when He said “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Christ constantly attributed to Himself divine characteristics. He claimed the power to forgive sins and the right to receive worship from men. When Thomas called Him “my Lord and my God,” He did not rebuke him. On the contrary, He promised men divine gifts such as peace and eternal life. He taught His own moral perfection. He put forward His teachings as absolutely authoritative, saying that heaven and earth would pass away but His words would never pass away. He claimed to be the Savior of the world, and that He would come at the end of the age to judge all men. His Jewish contemporaries certainly understood Him to be claiming Godhood, charging Him with blasphemy. On one occasion when they were going to stone Him to death, Jesus asked them for which of His good works He was being stoned. The Jews answered, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; because You, being a man, make Yourself God” (John 10:31-33).

These are only a few of the New Testament references concerning Christ’s divinity, but they should be sufficient to lay to rest this often-repeated misrepresentation of Christ. He cannot be dismissed as a good moral teacher like Buddha or Confucius. He does not allow this option.

Lie #6: The accounts of Christ are not reliable since they were written long after His death.

This is one way men have tried to avoid the supernatural character and staggering claims of Christ. These things, they say, were invented by His followers many years later. This attempt to escape the Christ of Scripture cannot stand in light of historical investigation. The evidence that the biographies of Christ were written within the lifetime of His contemporaries is now so strong that William F. Albright (the foremost American Biblical archaeologist until his death in 1971) stated that “every book of the New Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the forties and the eighties of the first century AD.” The portrait of Christ in the New Testament is entirely beyond the scope of human invention. He stands too high above anyone who could have produced Him. It would have

taken someone equal to the Christ presented in Scripture to have invented such a perfectly human and divine character. Certainly the apostles would not have given their lives (which most of them did) for something they knew they had conjured up in their own imaginations.

The only explanation that makes sense is the obvious one: the Bible contains just what it claims— eyewitness accounts of the most amazing person that ever walked this earth— God incarnate. As the apostle Peter put it, “We did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty” (2 Peter 1:16).

If you really want to use your mind, why not read the New Testament, being as honest as you can with what you read? In the Gospel of John, which is a good place to start reading, the Lord said, “If anyone is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself” (John 7:17).

Lie #7: Man is basically good.

It is amazing in the light of human history that men still see themselves as basically good. Think of just the 20th century: two world wars, the Nazi concentration camps, Vietnam, the sixty-six million Russians exterminated since the Bolshevik revolution, and the millions murdered under Mao. These are just a few recent examples of the fact that most of the history of mankind has been written in blood and tears. Still man tries to deceive himself with flattering thoughts of his own goodness. But here is the Bible’s realistic assessment: “The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil” (Ecclesiastes 9:3).

It is true that man as God originally made him was good, but since he has rebelled against his Creator, man is in his very nature corrupt. One reason men still view themselves as basically good is that they compare themselves with one another instead of measuring their lives by God’s righteous and holy standard. Of course, we don’t seem too bad if we lower the standard to fit our behavior. We look on the outward appearance. Sometimes we can do a pretty decent job of cleaning ourselves up on the outside, but what about the thoughts and motives of the heart? Jesus said that this is really what God’s commands are all about. For instance, the command against murder goes much deeper than just physically taking someone’s life. Every time you lose your temper, or harbor resentment, you are committing murder in your heart. “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer” (1 John 3:15). You may be able to hide your sin from others. You may even be able to convince yourself that you are not so bad. But be assured, one day you will stand before God to give an account of every thought, motive, and action.

Lie #8: God saves good people.

This lie, though similar to the one above, is usually heard in a different setting. Whereas the previous lie is presented mainly in the classroom, this one is put forth primarily in

campus religious groups. It goes something like this: Since God is a God of love, if you try to live a good life, God will overlook your moral failings (sins) and you will go to heaven. Even in supposedly Christian groups, this “good outweighing the bad in your life” view is often presented as the gospel. But this is not the gospel. It is a distortion of the truth concerning our sin and God’s love. First of all, our good is not nearly as good as we think and our bad is much worse than we think. Coupled with this is the fact that although God is a God of love, He never overlooks sin. He is just and holy and promises to punish all sin. Complete and absolute moral justice will be upheld in God’s universe. Where does that leave sinful people like you and me? It leaves us under the wrath and righteous judgment of God. But the wonder of the true gospel is that God has a way of punishing all sin and yet saving sinners. If you are interested in knowing that way, read the New Testament, especially the Gospels. One thing you will find as you read the Bible is that no one is good enough in themselves to go to heaven. On the other hand, you will also find that no one is so bad that God cannot save them.

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